BHAGAT): (a) and (b) No, Sir. AIR, Madras did not broadcast any such news item on 18th January, 1980. However AIR, Tiruchi in its Tamil news bulletin at 1410 hours on 18th December, 1987 carried the denial issued by the Tamil Nadu State Government regarding the appeal reported to have been made by the then Chief Minister in the Press to declare ceasefire in the IPKF operations in Sri Lanka for Christmas.

New Radial rail corridor for the NCR

1734. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for a new Radial Rail Corridor for the NCR;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what are the names of the major cities which are to be benefited by this proposal;

(d) what funds have been allocated for this purpose; and

(e) by when the scheme is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) No new Radial Rail Corridor has been proposed in the Draft Regional Plan-2001 National Capital Region, while four new expressways have been proposed.

(b) and (c) The names and number of cities likely to be covered under the proposed expressways on new alignments are as follows:—

Delhi-Ghaziabad- Meerut - Linking Ghaziabad, Modinagar and Meerut towns.

(d) and (e) The proposal in question is a part of the Draft Regional Plan approved by the NCR Planning Board for inviting objections and suggestions. The Draft Plan is in process of being finalised in the light of objections and suggestions received. Requirement of funds would be worked out after the finalisation of the Regional Plan. A time bound programme can be finalised only after the projects have been sanctioned and funds allocated.

Villages connected by Roads

1735. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the percentage of villages in the country yet to be connected by roads;

(b) the number of villages connected by roads during the year 1987 as against the target, if any, and how does it compare with the villages connected by roads during the years 1985 and 1986; and

(c) what are the existing criteria for rural roads development and whether with a view to promote balanced regional development, Government propose to bring about suitable changes in the criteria and if so, what steps have been taken by Government in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) As on 1-4-87, 60.28 per cent of total villages in the country were yet to be connected by all weather roads.

(b) As per the national norms all the villages with population over 1500 and 50 per cent of the villages with population between 1000—1500 are to be connected by all-weather roads by 1990 under the MNP. The target and achievement of villages belonging to these categories during